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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Friday, August 19, 1932. *culture*

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

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Subject: "Jellied Foods for Summer." Information approved by the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

That talk we had on Wednesday about cool summery cocktails and appetizers started me thinking of all the cool-looking jellied dishes that are just right for August meals. Did you ever try counting up on your fingers all the good things you can make with the aid of a little gelatin? You need many more than ten fingers for that job. Think of all the kinds and varieties of gelatin des-  
serts alone. And desserts are only a small part of the gelatin story. For every course at dinner, you can find several gelatin dishes that will be suitable. First course, a jellied appetizer. Main course, jellied meat or fish loaf. Salad course, a jellied fruit or vegetable salad. Finally, the dessert course. Gelatin desserts range from clear jellies, like lemon or coffee jelly, and molded fruit jellies, to sponges, Bavarian creams or charlottes. All these dishes are good for any time of year, but they have special advantages in summer. In the first place, they're cold dishes and they look cold and tempting. I don't need to mention to any of you how important the appearnace of food is in its effect on appetite. Perhaps it's because a mold of cold shivering clear jelly served on a glass plate suggests ice that it appeals so to the eye on a hot day.

A second advantage of gelatin dishes is their convenience. You can make them the evening before or in the cool of the morning. Then set them away in the refrigerator and forget all about them until mealtime when they'll be ready to serve with no extra fussing.

Gelatin is an interesting and somewhat curious food, when you come to think of it. It's a protein extracted from the bones, ligaments and tendons of sound young beeves. The nutritionists call gelatin an incomplete protein. That's because it can't alone support the growth or the repair of tissue as complete proteins like meat or eggs can. Gelatin is a very easily digested food--one of the reasons why it's so useful in invalid cookery.

By the way, of course you know that you can buy gelatin either in granular form as pure gelatin, or combined with sugar, flavoring material and coloring.

Gelatin has its own special characteristics, worth knowing if you want to make a success of gelatin dishes. In the first place, it melts when it's hot and jells or becomes solid when it gets cold. It won't stiffen until it's cold, but after it has jelled, it won't melt when served in a warm room. Most gelatin, except the specially prepared kind, dissolves easiest in hot liquid after it has had an opportunity to soak and swell in cold liquid.

Quick and easy as gelatin dishes are to make, they need plenty of time to set. Now and then a cook who is in a hurry puts in a large amount of gelatin



to make the mixture jell faster. It does set more quickly, but too much gelatin makes it tough and unattractive to eat. The tender jelly is the most delicious kind. And that is worth waiting a few hours for. So make your gelatin dessert in plenty of time and use only the amount of gelatin needed to solidify the mixture.

How much gelatin to use? Well, the proportion of gelatin to liquid varies somewhat according to the dish you're making, but the general proportion is two tablespoons of gelatin to one quart of liquid. And that includes the cold liquid used for soaking the gelatin. That's it--two tablespoons of gelatin to every quart of liquid as a general rule.

A third point that deserves mention is that gelatin dishes are especially helpful in using left-overs. Vegetables raw and cooked, left-overs of meat, fish, and canned fruits or fruit dishes--these are some of the things that you can use to make delicious gelatin dishes. Those little odds and ends of food, too small to go around the family and too likely to go to waste while you're trying to think what to do with them--these are the left-overs that may make good gelatin dishes.

That reminds me of the vegetable ring my Next-Door Neighbor-made the other day. It was a handsome and delicious dish, if ever I saw one. Yet all made of left-overs. When I dropped in to see my Neighbor, she was investigating the contents of her refrigerator.

"Dear me. What a collection of odds and ends," she said "Look here. A few cooked string beans, a few carrots and one small helping of green peas left from dinner. I also have a small end of a head of cabbage, a few stalks of celery and a small green pepper."

"What are you planning to do with all these?" I inquired.

"Just watch," said My Neighbor.

She cut up the carrots and celery into small pieces. She shredded the raw cabbage and chopped the green peppers. Then she made a gelatin mixture of lemon juice, gelatin, salt and just a bit of sugar. When the mixture began to thicken she added the diced vegetable. Then she got out her ring mold for holly, one of those circle molds with an empty space in the center. She wet the mold in cold water. Then into this went the gelatin mixture and then it went into the refrigerator to set. That evening the vegetable ring appeared on my Neighbor's table in all its glory. She had turned it out on a platter, garnished it with crisp lettuce leaves and piled the center high with stiff salad dressing.

Have you even tried making a gelatin dessert of fresh pineapple? More young housekeepers get fooled on that than any cooking joke I know of. It's one of those things that just can't be done. Curiously enough, fresh pineapple contains what the scientists call an enzyme that digests gelatin. If you put pieces of fresh pineapple into a gelatin mixture, that enzyme will get to work and change the gelatin so it won't jell. If you want pineapple jelly, cook your pineapple first or else use the canned variety.

Now let's plan a menu for a very simple summer luncheon. This is a simple family meal for a hot August noontime. The main dish is an egg and vegetable jelly salad. That's the recipe I'm going to give you today. Egg and vegetable jelly salad served with hard crusty rolls. Lemonade to drink. For dessert, muskmelon a la mode.





For this inexpensive main dish--egg and vegetable jelly salad, you'll need nine ingredients.

3 tablespoons gelatin  
1/2 cup cold water  
1 quart boiling water  
3 teaspoons salt  
1/4 cup lemon juice

2 cups shredded cabbage  
3 tablespoons grated prepared  
horseradish  
5 hard cooked eggs  
3 small, ripe, skinned tomatoes,  
sliced thin.

I'll repeat those nine ingredients. (Repeat)

Soften the gelatin in the cold water, add the boiling water and salt. Stir until the gelatin has dissolved. After this has cooled, add the lemon juice. When the mixture is partly set, remove about 1/2 cup, and to the remainder add the cabbage and horseradish. Cut the eggs into thin slices taking care not to disturb the yolk from the white. Dampen a mold or straight sided bowl with cold water and then decorate the inside and bottom with alternate slices of the egg and tomato, which have previously been dipped in the plain gelatin, removed from the mixture for that purpose. Keep the dish and ingredients as cold as possible while working. As soon as the inner surface of the dish has been covered, cut the remaining egg and tomatoes in small pieces. Add this to the cabbage mixture and stir until well blended. Fill the center of the mold with this mixture and put into a cold place until set. Turn out on crisp lettuce leaves and serve with salad dressing.

Just one more point about gelatin dishes. Gelatin spoils just as other protein foods do. And when it spoils it is just as dangerous to health. It's no safer to keep a gelatin dish day after day and then to serve it, than it is to keep a meat dish or a fish dish. Sometimes food which doesn't look spoiled and which isn't affected much in flavor, is still in bad condition to eat.

Tomorrow: "Odds and Ends."

